

COLLECTION OF STUDIES

# Geo-blocking

## Internal Market and Consumer Protection

### BACKGROUND

Rapid progress in digital technologies has created the new disruptive business models and innovative services. While **digital revolution** improves access to information, it often faces traditional as well as new types of **barriers** preventing the completion of the **Digital Single Market**. An example of such a barrier is the **geo-blocking** of content, services and goods.

Geo-blocking practices **discriminate** between European consumers on grounds of **nationality, place of residence or place of establishment** within the Internal Market. The European Parliament is constantly concerned that refusals of access to digital services or discrimination of consumers driven by **geographic partitioning** is not compatible with the ambition to create a ubiquitous Digital Single Market in Europe.

In the context of the agreement reached between the European Parliament and the Council on the geo-blocking proposal, this collection of **key studies** presents research prepared for the European Parliament by independent academic experts on geo-blocking as a barrier significantly affecting the well-functioning of the Digital Single Market.

### INSIDE

This leaflet provides a compilation of papers prepared by the European Parliament's Policy Department A: Economic and Scientific Policy at the request of the IMCO Committee in relation to geo-blocking. *Please click on the title or scan the QR code to access the publication directly.*

### CONTACTS

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## PUBLICATIONS

### Completing the Digital Single Market for European Consumers and Citizens: Tackling Geo-blocking in the EU - 10th Meeting of the IMCO Working Group on the Digital Single Market -

September 2017



This report summarizes the discussion during the 10th Meeting of the IMCO Working Group on the Digital Single Market, led by MEP Róza Thun, presenting the exchange of views between MEPs, independent academic experts and the European Commission on the topic of geo-blocking in the Digital Single Market.



### Extending the Scope of the Geo-Blocking Prohibition: An Economic Assessment - January 2017



This study illustrates the prevalence of geo-blocking in e-commerce and discusses the economic impact of lifting geo-blocking restrictions in online goods and copyrighted digital content services. The study indicates both at benefits of prohibiting geo-blocking in EU and benefits of extending the scope of such prohibition.



### The Geo-Blocking Proposal: Internal Market, Competition Law and Regulatory Aspects - January 2017



This study provides legal analysis of the Commission's May 2016 proposal for a regulation addressing geo-blocking and other forms of customer discrimination based on customers' nationality, place of residence or place of establishment within the internal market. The study provides for policy recommendations and specific amendments to the proposal in light of the Internal Market, competition law and sector-specific rules.



### Building blocks of the Ubiquitous Digital Single Market - June 2015



Digital technologies enable new disruptive business models and fundamentally improved e-government solutions. They can transform the Digital Single Market into the main engine of growth and job creation. The workshop aimed at giving an overview of most advanced market and technological trends built on mobile connectivity and cloud computing.



## Combatting Consumer Discrimination in the Digital Single Market: Preventing Geo-Blocking and other Forms of Geo-Discrimination - August 2016



The paper conducts a stocktaking exercise of the state of play in the Digital Single Market and offers a critical assessment of the most relevant initiatives to combat consumer discrimination. It gives an overview of discriminatory practices in the online environment and assesses the magnitude of the problem. Differences between justified and unjustified geo-blocking are discussed.



## Reducing Costs and Barriers for Businesses in the Single Market - April 2016



The study points that reducing business costs and regulatory and market barriers is necessary to complete the Single Market. However, monitoring of barriers and costs in the EU is piecemeal and unsystematic, quantification and clear identification of barriers and costs is lacking, which makes prioritisation of policy actions difficult. Resulting costs of slow reform process and vague initiatives with uncertain time horizons in the area of e-commerce alone amount to €748 billion.



## Over-the-Top (OTTs) Players: Market Dynamics and Policy Challenges - December 2015



The study explores current and emerging business models for over-the-top (OTT) services (including Voice over IP, instant messaging services, and streaming video and music services). Moreover, it identifies costs and barriers to European online service development including over-the-top (OTT), and it describes the regulatory environment for online services in Europe.



## Discrimination of Consumers in the Digital Single Market - November 2013



The study compiles information on discrimination against consumers on grounds of place of residence or nationality in the Digital Single Market (DSM). The data indicates such practices as refusals to sell, geo-blocking and other discriminatory conditions, depriving consumers of access to goods and services in the DSM, or obliging consumers to pay higher prices.



## Streaming and Online Access to Content and Services - March 2014



The improved access to information and content enabled by the technological advances in cloud computing and mobile connectivity has had many benefits, including but not limited to, efficiency, innovation, and reduced environmental footprint through dematerialisation of consumption. Further adjustments can be expected in the economic and legal landscape, since the current legal framework is built on a partitioning of mobile Internet access and content along Member States' borders, thus significantly affecting the well-functioning of the Digital Single Market and preventing the EU from consolidating its comparative

advantage on the global ICT market.



## POLICY DEPARTMENTS

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## CONTACTS

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